

**Washington, DC**— Representatives Rosa L. DeLauro (CT-3), Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Gwen Moore (WI-4), Jan Schakowsky (IL-9), and Linda Sánchez (CA-39) honored the memory of the 146 lives lost in the 1911 Triangle Factory Fire in New York City today, on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragedy.

On March 25, 1911, a fire swept through the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in lower Manhattan, engulfing the 8th, 9th, and 10th floors where young women worked tortuous hours for little pay. The panicked workers tried to flee from the blaze, but encountered locked doors, broken fire escapes, and empty elevator shafts. Of the 146 workers who died that day, 62 of them were driven by the growing flames to the windows, and jumped to their deaths on the streets below. Another 84 workers died inside the factory, unable to escape the flames.

Among the witnesses to the tragedy was a young social worker named Frances Perkins, who dedicated her life to advocating for American workers and eventually became the first female Secretary of Labor. Her and a generation of progressives' hard work in advancing protections for workers, coupled with the nation's horror over the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, paved the way for standardized safety regulations and helped to foster organized labor unions.

"From the ashes of this catastrophe, and through Frances's work and the support of a nation shocked into action, significant improvements in safety regulations and a strengthening of organized labor movements arose," said Congresswoman DeLauro. "People realized that government has an important role to play in ensuring the life, health, and dignity of workers, women, and families. The lessons of the Triangle fire are still critically important as we today tackle the fight for workers rights and protections in states like Wisconsin, Ohio, and Indiana. We must never forget the legacy of these young men and women, and understand the urgent need to provide protections and rights for all of America's workers."

"As we mark this solemn anniversary and remember those lost in the Triangle Fire, we celebrate the movement it spurred - for worker safety, for better working conditions, for an end to exploitation of our workforce," Leader Pelosi said. "A century later, we must keep fighting for the rights of our workers to earn a living wage, provide for their families, have a voice at the bargaining table, and contribute to our prosperity."

"Tragically, this disaster was the impetus for so many reforms – from establishing basic

workplace safety standards to significant advances in the rights of workers and women,” Congresswoman Moore said. “Now, despite substantial progress made over the past one hundred years, we are still fighting to ensure that workers are safe as they perform their jobs and that they retain the right of collective bargaining so they can speak with one voice at the negotiating table.”

“The tragedy of the Triangle fire is not just the deaths of 146 workers – mostly young women in their teens and early twenties – but the fact that those deaths were avoidable,” Congresswoman Schakowsky said. “What resulted from the tragedy, however, is nothing short of inspiring: the activism of surviving workers resulted in the passage of major worker protections – not just new fire safety laws, but laws against 7-day work weeks and child labor, the right to union representation, collective bargaining rights, and a voice at work. Today, we confront a coordinated effort led by Republican Governors around the country to roll back the hard fought gains that were won thanks to the organizing power of unions, workers and their supporters. The message remains clear, 100 years after the Triangle fire: we will not go back to the days when workers had no voice, no dignity and no safety.”

**“In marking this tragic anniversary, we should remember how far we have come in terms of advancing the rights of workers and of women,”** said Congresswoman Sánchez. **“Thanks to hard-fought reforms, workers today have safeguards to protect them from being exploited by their employers and recourse when minimum workplace safety standards are not met. A tragedy like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire is especially important to remember today because many lawmakers in Washington and in the states want to peel back the rights of workers—if they succeed in their efforts, it just may take a repeat of this tragedy to remind us of the importance of the workers’ voice in the workplace.”**